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**MISSISSIPPI**  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

Forrest County  
Health Department  
5008 Highway 42  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi  
39401

601/583-0291  
601/584-4057 Fax

22 October 2005

Mr. Donald Silawsky  
Office of Petroleum Reserves (FE-47)  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20585-0229

## PUBLIC COMMENT RE: SPR Site Selection

Dear Mr. Silawsky:

I am 58-year-old resident of Hattiesburg, Mississippi where I have lived since 1955. I have been licensed to practice medicine in the State of Mississippi since 1972 and I have been a physician with the Mississippi State Health Department since the early 1980's.

Please know that I oppose the Richton Salt Dome as an expansion site for the SPR Program. My opposition is based upon the following concerns:

1. The likely significantly greater construction cost of the Richton site compared to the other candidate sites, due to the length of the proposed disposal and distribution pipelines.
2. My recollection is that a 21 mile pipeline to the Leaf River was a part of the construction design for the Richton Salt Dome as a candidate site for the original SPR selection process, a water source being necessary to create the oil storage cavern within the salt dome. Should a draw-down of the Leaf River be a part of the current plans for the Richton Dome, I am concerned about its potential to adversely impact the Lower Pascagoula River Basin. [As you are likely aware, the Leaf River and the Chickasawhay River meet to form the Pascagoula River. You may also be aware that the Lower Pascagoula River Basin is the last remaining, un-altered (no significant impoundments or diversions) large river system in the lower 48 States.] A multi-agency effort has been actively promoting and the Pascagoula River as a significant eco-tourism destination, an effort that received emphasis in the plans released this week for the post-Katrina reconstruction of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my comments on this worthy program.

Sincerely,

  
James F. Puckett, M.D.